

PREFACE

The great state of Montana is confronted daily with the possibility of disaster occurrences. Both natural and manmade hazards pose a constant threat to the security and survival of the people, property of this state, and the environment. Such hazards as winter storms, earthquakes, floods, droughts, and tornadoes have the potential for inflicting tremendous damage and corresponding losses upon most communities of our state. Twentieth century technology creates additional hazards. As our economic systems continue to grow, both air and ground disasters grow proportionally. Our technology requires transportation of even more hazardous, explosive, corrosive, and poisonous materials on our highways, railways, and airways. Although the impending threat of warfare is felt less today the probability cannot be ruled out. With the existence of nuclear weapons on our soil an obvious accident potential exists. With continued growth and expansion in Montana, it is clear that the damage and destruction reflected in these hazards will not diminish, but will become increasingly more important concerns.

While many of the above circumstances cannot be avoided, such situations may be manageable. Adequate and realistic preparedness and mitigation planning have proven to be effective instruments for decreasing damages and losses incurred from such incidents. This is not to say that such planning can eliminate the actual hazard occurrence, but that instead, it can serve to reduce the impact of these disasters upon people and property.

The Montana Disaster and Emergency Services Division (MT DES) has been designated as the states coordinating agency for disaster preparedness, emergency response, recovery operations, and hazard mitigation activities. This designation tasks the MT DES with constantly working to develop and implement measures that will increase the level of safety for the states inhabitants when emergencies occur.

This Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan represents the efforts of the MT DES in fulfilling its responsibility for hazard mitigation planning. Prior to the development of this plan a State Hazard Mitigation Team (SHMT) was trained, by using E.M.I. Course G-376. In July of 1997 a refresher course was taught to the SHMT. A Training course was also prepared and taught to local DES Coordinators, as well as refresher class in July 1997. In several cases in past years the State Hazard Mitigation Officer (SHMO) has taken members of the SHMT to work with local communities to mitigate some hazard. The development of this plan will add to the emphasis and creditability of the program.

As a result of disasters FEMA-DR-1183-MT SHMO and personnel from FEMA Region VIII conducted applicant briefings for all counties involved in the disasters. Actually beginning with this disaster, all counties were eligible and invited to attend briefings. Several submitted Hazard Mitigation grant Program (HMGP) projects. During the August and September 1997 The SHMO and members of the FEMA Region VIII Mitigation Office conducted specific HMGP application training for each person who was to submit an application.